



The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

Guidance – Club Rules and Organisation

The PAGB, its member Federations and their member Clubs are all independently autonomous. This guidance is not prescriptive, but is intended to help with the fundamental principles of Club organisation. It is hoped that the information will prove useful not only to new Clubs, but also to established Clubs who may wish to examine, overhaul and make improvements to their existing rules and methods of procedure.

Rules are needed from the outset but should be kept to a minimum and quite simple. You need only a few to start with. Others can be added later if required. Don't include the details of meetings, exhibitions, etc., or actual rates of subscriptions.

It is easier to have a straightforward rule than to amend an unsatisfactory existing one. The more complicated your rules, the more time you will waste arguing at meetings.

By all means consult the rules of other similar Clubs, but do not copy them blindly or without understanding their possible application to your own Club.

1. Your Name

You should state the name of your Club (or Society, or other style). This is your identity and will be needed for any bank account. Most Clubs use a geographical name. Ensure the name cannot be confused with another local Club.

Example: The “Somewhere” Club is established with the following purposes.

2. Your Objects

As a photographic Club, your objects will probably be the mutual advancement of photography amongst your members. Your objects and basic arrangements for meetings will determine whether you qualify for membership of your regional Federation, and whether you then qualify for automatic affiliation to the PAGB. Therefore, you should consider any conditions set into the constitutions of your regional Federation and the PAGB to make sure you would qualify, if that is what you want.

Example: The objects of the Club are to hold meetings for the improvement of photographic art and technique amongst its members.

3. Membership

Most Clubs have an open membership policy. A few operate by invitation. You may want to specify an application procedure.

Example: Membership is open to any person interested to support the Club's objects. Applications should be made to the Secretary.

4. Subscriptions

You will have to fund your Club's activities, and this will be via subscriptions and charges levied on the members.

Example: The Entrance Fee, Annual Subscription and Attendance Charge will be determined at the Annual General Meeting. A member failing to pay by the due date shall forfeit membership.

5. Your Management

You will need a committee to manage the day to day affairs of the Club, subject to your Rules and any decisions by a general meeting.

Example: The management of the Club is vested in the Committee, comprising the four Officers of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, and the Other Members. All members of the Committee shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting.

Your Officers might have other titles. You might want to include the Past Chairman ex-officio. You might want to specify the number of Other Members. You might want to specify a quorum of the Committee.

To manage a bank account, the bank will want evidence of who is authorised to apply and then manage any accounts. You can be precise in your rules, or you can be more generic and allow the Committee to fill in the detail.

Example (1): The Committee is authorised to open and manage bank accounts in the name of the Club, where the signatories shall be any two of the Officers.

Example (2): The Committee is authorised to open and manage bank accounts in the name of the Club. Procedures to commit expenditure and manage any accounts shall be specified by the Committee.

6. General Meetings

You will need an Annual General Meeting, which will probably be related to your financial year. You may want to specify the routine business of the annual meeting, meaning that anything else has to be added specifically. You should say how proposals for elections or other business will be managed.

Example: The Club year shall run from to An Annual General Meeting shall be held each The routine business shall include Minutes of the previous meeting, Annual report from the Committee, Annual report and accounts from the Treasurer, Subscriptions and fees for the coming year. Proposals for other business shall be in the hands of the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the advertised date.

You may need provision for Special General Meetings. Special General Meetings are usually restricted to precise business.

Example: A Special General Meeting shall be convened at any time by the Committee or on the requisition of not less than one quarter of the members.

Annual General Meetings are usually scheduled well in advance within the Club programme. You may want to specify a notice period for Special General Meetings. 21 days is usual.

7. Alterations

Rules will need alteration from time to time. You should say how this can happen.

Example: These Rules may be altered only by a general meeting.

8. Dissolution

You are probably not thinking of dissolving your Club just at the time it is being formed. Clubs acquire equipment and other assets with time, and it needs to be clear that these are not the property of or shareable amongst the current members.

Example: The Club may be dissolved only by the consent of three-fourths of the Members present at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose. The Meeting shall then appoint a Liquidator to realise the assets of the Club, with their distribution to one or more organisations with similar objects.

Related Matters

Having a set of Club Rules is not the end of the requirements for running a Club.

Committee Procedures

Your Committee will need to establish how it works and how tasks are shared out amongst its members. Besides the obvious duties of the Officers, common tasks include Programme, Competitions, Exhibition and Website.

The whole Committee is jointly liable for the financial management of the Club, so it is important that the Committee sets clear procedures for the Treasurer.

Competitions

Most Clubs run some kind of competition format, or at least facilitate showing of photographs by members. You will need some rules to manage the processes, and these may be compiled and managed by the Committee.

Code of Conduct

You may want a code of conduct for members with an ultimate option of removing membership. Any code should be known by your members. Any procedures must be scrupulously fair and it is better to devise such procedures before they are needed.

Insurance

Public liability insurance protects your members and visitors. Various insurers are available. If your Club qualifies as a PAGB Affiliated Club, then the PAGB has negotiated a suitable policy.

Audit

It is a good idea for one or two members independent of the Committee to be appointed to review the Treasurer's annual report and accounts before they are presented to the Annual General Meeting. These members may be called auditors or examiners.

Data Protection

A Club holding members' information is a data controller. The PAGB has separate guidance on data protection.

Tax

A Club is liable for corporation tax on its trading profits.

Transactions within the membership for club activities are not trading, and most Clubs would only have a corporation tax liability on their bank interest. As bank interest can be minimal, it would fall below the limit enforced by HMRC, and a Club will be regarded as a dormant business not liable for tax. The exact definition of 'trade' is complex, and Clubs may wish to avoid that complexity by ensuring that they do not trade with the public.

Charity Status

A few Clubs have taken Charity status. A Charity can only exist if it is for the public good, which is a separate object additional to the mutual benefit of a typical unincorporated members' club. A Club considering Charity status would need to take detailed advice about the benefits and responsibilities involved.